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AMWA Applauds New Water Infrastructure Legislation *Bill Will Help Utilities Prepare for Hydrological Changes*

Washington, D.C. – The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) today applauded the introduction of H.R. 2738, the “Water Infrastructure Resiliency and Sustainability Act of 2011,” legislation sponsored by Rep. Lois Capps (D-Calif.) that will authorize a new EPA program offering competitive grant funds to help water systems adapt to the impacts of changing hydrological conditions – including those resulting from global climate change.

“In the decades ahead, the nation’s water and wastewater systems are expected to face a series of water quality and quantity challenges brought on by severe drought, melting snowpack, more frequent heavy precipitation events, and rising sea levels,” said Diane VanDe Hei, AMWA’s Executive Director. “The ‘Water Infrastructure Resiliency and Sustainability Act’ will help communities access the tools they need to maintain clean and safe water service despite these new obstacles.”

The new legislation, which is based on proposals that were originally introduced in the 111th Congress, directs EPA to establish a grant program through which water and wastewater systems will compete for matching funds to plan or implement water infrastructure projects made necessary by changing hydrological conditions. For example, utilities may propose projects to rebuild or relocate water infrastructure, develop new water supplies, engage in sourcewater protection or other “green infrastructure” initiatives, increase water efficiency, or undertake studies to identify future scenarios for which they must prepare.

“AMWA has estimated that adapting to hydrological conditions brought about by climate change may cost U.S. water and wastewater systems nearly \$1 trillion through 2050,” said VanDe Hei. “This bill’s modest authorization of \$50 million per year will help utilities begin addressing these needs today, while also creating thousands of jobs.”

The “Water Infrastructure Resiliency and Sustainability Act of 2011” is supported by a wide variety of stakeholders representing the water utility and environmental communities. A letter of support for the bill signed by these groups is attached.

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The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies is an organization of the largest publicly owned drinking water suppliers in the United States.

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